

# ***NEWS***

*From the Office of*

## **Brad Mitzelfelt**

Supervisor, First District  
San Bernardino County

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### **Mitzelfelt Proposal Will Expand Illegal Alien Identification, Deportation Program to High Desert Jails**

SAN BERNARDINO – First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt today announced his intention to allocate \$100,000 to expand the Sheriff's Department's Criminal Illegal Alien Identification unit. The unit, which identifies illegal aliens in the County jail system and refers them for deportation, successfully identified more than 2,300 criminal illegal aliens last year at the County's West Valley Detention Center (WVDC). The program currently exists only at the County's WVDC in Rancho Cucamonga.

"I'm seeking to expand the Criminal Illegal Alien Identification program to other jails because it's critical that we identify every criminal illegal alien in our jail system and refer them for deportation," said Supervisor Mitzelfelt. "Hiring and training staff to perform these duties throughout the County would be very expensive, but I'm proposing a solution that would only cost a fraction of that price."

Supervisor Mitzelfelt is proposing to allocate \$100,000 from his priority policy budget to purchase video conferencing equipment that will enable specially trained staff at WVDC to screen inmates at remote locations. The equipment would be installed in jail facilities in Barstow, the Morongo Basin, the Victor Valley, and the Central Detention Center in San Bernardino.

"Screening inmates at these other jail facilities will not only help us to refer more criminal illegal aliens for deportation, but it will also give us a better idea of how much jailing the inmates is costing the County, which will help us make a better argument for federal reimbursement," added Mitzelfelt.

In 2006, the County created a Criminal Illegal Alien Identification unit in the Sheriff's Department and hired nine Custody Specialists who received special training through an agreement the County negotiated with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The staff members are certified to perform certain immigration enforcement functions, including identifying criminal illegal aliens and placing immigration holds, which ensure the inmates are handed over to federal officials for deportation rather than being released into the public.

The unit identified more than 4,000 illegal aliens at WVDC last year. They were incarcerated for an average of more than 120 days each, which cost the county approximately \$24 million.